

403.090 Friend of the court -- Appointment -- Tenure -- Duties -- Wage withholding collections -- Compensation.

- (1) The fiscal court of any county may, by resolution, authorize the appointment of a "friend of the court." If the Circuit Court of the county has but one (1) judge, the appointment shall be made by the judge. If the court has two (2) or more judges, the appointment shall be made by joint action of the judges, at the general term. The person appointed to the office of friend of the court shall serve at the pleasure of, and subject to removal by, the appointing authority. The person appointed shall be a licensed practicing attorney. The appointed person shall take the constitutional oath of office and shall give bond in such sum as may be fixed by the appointing judge or judges.
- (2) Except for those cases administered pursuant to 42 U.S.C. secs. 651 et seq., it shall be the duty of the friend of the court to supervise and enforce the payment of sums ordered or adjudged by the Circuit Court in divorce actions to be paid for the care and maintenance of minor children. All persons who have been ordered or adjudged by the court, in connection with divorce actions, to make payments for the care and maintenance of children, shall, if so ordered by the court, make such payments to the friend of the court. The friend of the court shall see that the payments, except for those cases administered pursuant to 42 U.S.C. secs. 651 et seq., are properly applied in accordance with the order or judgment. However, if the court so directs, the payments may be made through the juvenile session of District Court of the county; in such case the friend of the court shall render such assistance as may be required in keeping records concerning such payments and in the enforcement of delinquent payments, and the Circuit Court may direct that a designated amount or portion of the funds appropriated by the fiscal court for expenses of the friend of the court be paid to the juvenile session of District Court as reimbursement for the expenses incurred by the juvenile session of District Court in connection with the handling of such payments. The friend of the court shall promptly investigate all cases where payments have become delinquent, and when necessary shall cause the delinquent person to be brought before the court for the purpose of compelling payment. The friend of the court shall ascertain the facts concerning the care, custody, and maintenance of children for whom payments are being made, and shall report to the court all cases in which the children are not receiving proper care or maintenance, or in which the person having custody is failing to furnish proper custody. He shall make such other reports to the court as the court may require.
- (3) In the event that a waiver is granted under 42 U.S.C. secs. 651 et seq., allowing payment of wage withholding collections to be directed to the friend of the court, an obligor shall be given the option of payment either to the friend of the court or the centralized collection agency.
- (4) In any action for divorce where the parties have minor children, the friend of the court, if requested by the trial judge, shall make such investigation as will enable the friend of the court to ascertain all facts and circumstances that will affect the rights and interests of the children and will enable the court to enter just and proper orders and judgment concerning the care, custody, and maintenance of the children.

The friend of the court shall make a report to the trial judge, at a time fixed by the judge, setting forth recommendations as to the care, custody, and maintenance of the children. The friend of the court may request the court to postpone the final submission of any case to give the friend of the court a reasonable time in which to complete the investigation.

- (5) The friend of the court shall have authority to secure the issuance by the court of any order, rule, or citation necessary for the proper enforcement of orders and judgments in divorce actions concerning the custody, care, and maintenance of children. In performing duties under subsection (4) of this section the friend of the court shall attend the taking of depositions within the county, and shall have authority to cross-examine the witnesses. In the case of depositions taken on interrogatories, the friend of the court may file cross-interrogatories. The friend of the court shall be duly notified of the time and place of the taking of depositions in all divorce actions where the parties have minor children, and shall attend the taking of all such depositions when the friend of the court deems it necessary for the protection of the minor children, or when the friend of the court may be directed by the court to attend.
- (6) The friend of the court shall not directly or indirectly represent any party to a divorce action except as herein authorized to represent the minor children of parties to a divorce action, but if an allowance is made for the support of a spouse and an infant child or children, may proceed to enforce the payment of the allowance made to the spouse also.
- (7) Where a friend of the court is acting as a designee of the cabinet pursuant to KRS 205.712 and an applicant for Title IV-D services pursuant to KRS 205.721 has requested a modification of an existing child support order pursuant to a divorce or other judicial order, the friend of the court shall seek the modification, providing all jurisdictional requirements are met. The friend of the court's representation shall extend only for the limited purpose of seeking a modification of an existing child support order consistent with the provisions of KRS 403.212.
- (8) The fiscal court of any county which has authorized the appointment of a friend of the court under this section shall, by resolution, fix a reasonable compensation for the friend of the court and make a reasonable allowance for necessary expenses, equipment, and supplies, payable out of the general fund of the county, upon approval of the appointing judge or judges.

Effective: July 15, 1998

History: Amended 1998 Ky. Acts ch. 255, sec. 16, effective July 15, 1998. -- Amended 1994 Ky. Acts ch. 330, sec. 7, effective July 15, 1994. -- Amended 1980 Ky. Acts ch. 188, sec. 180, effective July 15, 1980. -- Amended 1974 Ky. Acts ch. 386, sec. 95. -- Amended 1968 Ky. Acts ch. 150, sec. 1. -- Amended 1966 Ky. Acts ch. 161, sec. 1. -- Amended 1964 Ky. Acts ch. 169, sec. 1. -- Amended 1956 Ky. Acts ch. 214, sec. 1. -- Amended 1948 Ky. Acts ch. 168, sec. 1. -- Created 1946 Ky. Acts ch. 166, sec. 1.